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UNCLAS DJIBOUTI 000259

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EWWT](#) [PHSA](#) [KCRM](#) [PBTS](#) [YM](#) [DJ](#)

SUBJECT: REPORT OF ATTACK ON U.S. SAILBOATS NEAR YEMEN

**¶1.** (U) ConOff was approached March 10 by an officer from CJTF-HOA, informing her that CJTF-HOA had received a report that two private American sailboats had come under fire while sailing the Gulf of Aden on March 8. The source of the report, a third American sailboat, had contacted the military requesting guidance and information on potential assistance. The text of the third sailboat's account follows:

"Unfortunately, there was a pirate attack on two boats yesterday March 8 at 5pm Yemen time at position: 13 28N 48 07E. I will repeat the information that we received on our Net this morning.

Two boats (Mahdi and Gandalf email above) were sailing about 25 miles off the coast of Yemen yesterday, when they were approached by two fast boats earlier in the day, probably as a set-up for the attack. At about 5pm two boats were sitting in the sun and quickly sped up to intercept them. The description of the boats was: a blue hulled rib cage boat with inboard motors (but we think they were outboards hidden below) with orange tarp over the men, so that when they were within 50 feet of the boats they opened fire. The sailboats did return fire and think that they may have wounded one of the pirates and Gandalf rammed one of the boats and the pirates left. The boats have bullet holes but are sea worthy and Gandalf has bullet holes in his dinghy and possible damage from ramming the pirate boat. Thankfully, they were not boarded and robbed, no one was injured, and their boats are fine.

Maydays were made, but no one responded.

They have been in touch with the Port Captain at Aden and were promised assistance to enter the harbor tonight between 10-12pm; however, we are wondering if they should go into Aden considering that shots were fired. Could it become a very serious and possibly dangerous situation for them there? ."

**¶2.** (U) Upon verifying that active hostilities were not ongoing, and that the boats were able to make port on their own power, the military passed the message to Embassy Djibouti for follow up. Embassy Djibouti is responding, and will advise the boats that if they choose to dock in Djibouti, we will offer any victims assistance, and medical care if they request it. We have an NCIS investigator at the Embassy who will interview them for identifying information about the attacking vessels and their crew, which he can pass to regional Navies.

**¶3.** (U) We have reason to believe the AmCits may arrive in Djibouti. They are said to fear reprisal in Yemen for shooting one of the attackers and would prefer not to dock in Yemen. They reportedly have also been advised that diesel and boat repair resources may be limited in Eritrea. If the individuals involved contact the embassy, we will interview them and provide an updated report.

Ragsdale